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**Comments of Jerry Prieto, Jr.,  
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and Measures – President, California Agricultural Commissioners and  
Sealers Association**

**Before USDA Secretary Mike Johanns' Farm Bill Forum, Fresno,  
California**

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Secretary Johanns, welcome to the Number One agricultural production county in the nation and thank you for providing this forum to receive input from our farmers, ranchers, dairymen, local governments, and associated industries. In 2004 Fresno County produced 350 different crops with a gross value of \$4.6 billion. Using a conservative economic multiplier of 3.5, the total direct and indirect contribution to our county's economy totaled \$16.1 billion. I am the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures for Fresno County. I am also the President of the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA). We work under the direction of the Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Director, California Department of Pesticide Regulation and enforce the California Food and Agriculture Code, the California Code of Regulations, and the California Business and Professions Code, at the local level. We are also Federal Collaborators for phytosanitary certificate issuance. We are employed by the county in which we are located and are present in 54 of the 58 counties.

On behalf of the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association I wish to address the question of: "How should farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?"

The need to protect our food supply is greater than ever. With the increasing movement of people and commerce, our environment, and food supply is at serious risk from the accidental or intentional introduction of exotic and invasive species. Invasive species are considered the second greatest threat to biological diversity (after habitat loss), and range from plants and animals to insect pests and various diseases. California is particularly vulnerable because of the diversity of its agricultural production and the trade of agricultural products with other states and foreign countries. Further, California,

- Has the largest single land international border at San Ysidro, and the sixth busiest port in the world in Los Angeles;
- Is home to over 10% of the nation's population;

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social and economic conditions of the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the political situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the political conditions of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the economic conditions of the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the cultural conditions of the country.

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6. The fifth part of the report deals with the social situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social conditions of the country.

7. The sixth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the political conditions of the country.

8. The seventh part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the economic conditions of the country.

9. The eighth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the cultural conditions of the country.

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12. The eleventh part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the economic conditions of the country.

13. The twelfth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the cultural conditions of the country.

14. The thirteenth part of the report deals with the social situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social conditions of the country.

15. The fourteenth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the political conditions of the country.

- Produces \$30 billion annually in agricultural production, and 15% of the nation's agricultural production value; and,
- Supplies over 40% of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables.

Consequently, the risk to California is in reality a risk to the entire nation's food supply. California is a potential gateway to the entire nation for biological pollution. An outbreak of disease and/or pest infestation could cost the nation billions of dollars in pest eradication efforts and threaten our nation's economy and domestic food and fiber supply.

The California County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture manage programs for excluding, detecting, eradicating and controlling harmful animal diseases, insects, weeds, plant diseases, and rodents. Interception of quarantined pests and diseases at points of entry to California is our primary defense against the introduction and spread of these pests and diseases within the state. Allowing these pests to become established threatens our environment and conservation efforts through biological pollution that can destroy rangelands, forests, and waterways. Exotic pests, such as the Mediterranean Fruit Fly, result in the quarantining of crop growing regions, with resultant revenue loss to the farmer, and widespread application of pesticides, and eradication costs to federal, state and local governments.

The California High Risk Pest Exclusion program operated by the County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture inspects and investigates incoming plant shipments for pests and diseases, and evaluates critical pest pathways to stop potential introductions and infestations. Inspections are made at terminals inside the California borders such as nurseries, domestic airports, post offices, express carriers (UPS, FedEx and others), swap meets and many similar locations. In addition, California's sixteen border inspection stations prevent the entry and permanent establishment of biological pollution, and are located on the major highways entering the state via Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona. In 2002, over 33 million vehicles passed through the border agricultural inspection stations, including six million trucks and more than 800,000 recreational vehicles.

The California High Risk Pest Exclusion Program has been unable to keep pace with the increased risks caused by the ease of today's interstate and international movement of people and commerce. Since 1993, the value of U.S. imports has doubled to approximately \$42 billion. The reduction of international trade barriers has increased California's exports by 68 percent. From 1980 to 2000, there was a 127 percent increase in international passenger arrivals. Volumes of air cargo are doubling every five to six years and an increasing percentage of this cargo consists of perishable commodities such as cut flowers, fruits and vegetables.

Ironically, even as the risks have increased, during the past four years, the California High Risk Pest Exclusion Program has lost significant levels of funding – and more losses are projected. There is currently no Federal funding for the California High Risk Pest Exclusion Program. A baseline of \$30 million in matching federal funding for pest prevention is needed to provide California with the greatest level of protection against plant and animals



pests and diseases that can adversely impact human health, commerce, and California's precious natural resources. Put simply: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

A contingent of California Agricultural Commissioners visited Washington D.C. last March and we met with our Congressional Representatives and Senators to request assistance in sponsoring federal legislation that provides \$30 million in continuous appropriation to USDA for the California High Risk Pest Exclusion Program that is operated by the California Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The \$30 million would be available as a match to the state and county funding for high risk pest exclusion activities. Congressman Pombo has drafted a bill that authorizes grants to states that have legal authority to conduct high risk pest exclusion activities. The bill does not expand California Agricultural Commissioners' authority. I respectfully request your support of this bill as it proceeds through the legislative process. We have been and currently are partners in the effort to protect our agricultural industry and environment from invasive pests and diseases. I will leave a copy of my comments and a copy of our funding proposal with your staff.

Thank you again for providing this forum.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders. The text also mentions the need for regular audits to ensure the accuracy of the records.

2. The second part of the document outlines the company's policy on employee conduct. It states that all employees are expected to adhere to a high standard of ethical behavior and to follow the company's code of conduct. The policy also includes provisions for disciplinary action in cases of misconduct.

3. The third part of the document describes the company's commitment to environmental sustainability. It outlines the various initiatives and programs that the company has implemented to reduce its carbon footprint and to promote sustainable practices. The text also mentions the company's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by a specific date.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the company's approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR). It highlights the various ways in which the company engages with the community and supports social causes. The text also mentions the company's commitment to transparency and accountability in its CSR activities.

5. The fifth part of the document provides information about the company's financial performance. It includes a summary of the company's revenue, expenses, and profits for the reporting period. The text also mentions the company's financial goals for the future.